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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/627,727	07/28/2003	Kazunori Inoue	1082.1061	7084

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STAAS & HALSEY LLP
SUITE 700
1201 NEW YORK AVENUE, N.W.
WASHINGTON, DC 20005

EXAMINER

HODGES, MATTHEW P

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

2879

DATE MAILED: 09/07/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/627,727

Applicant(s)

INOUE ET AL.

Examiner

Matt P. Hodges

Art Unit

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 24 June 2005.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-8 and 14-18 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-8 and 14-18 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 28 July 2003 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Amendment

The Amendment, filed on 6/24/2005, has been entered and acknowledged by the Examiner.

Cancellation of claims 9-13 has been entered.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claims 16-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Uemura et al. (US 6,650,063).

Regarding claims 16 and 17, Uemura discloses (See Figure 1), a gas discharge panel including a front substrate (21), electrodes (22 and 23) formed on the substrate, a dielectric layer (26) of low melting point sheet glass formed on the substrate and electrodes, and a protection layer (27-2) formed on the dielectric layer. (Column 5 lines 20-36). The protection layer has a bi-layer structure where it includes both MgO and TiO₂. (Column 3 lines 27-38). Further TiO₂ is layered in at least 3m thick and therefore has an ultraviolet shielding function.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-8, 14 and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as anticipated by Uemura et al. (US 6,650,063) or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Nakada et al. (US 2003/0030375 A1) in view of Uemura et al. (US 6,650,063).

Regarding claims 1, 4, and 14, Uemura discloses (See Figure 1), a gas discharge panel including a front substrate (21), electrodes (22 and 23) formed on the substrate, a dielectric layer (26) of low melting point glass (SiO_2) formed on the substrate and electrodes, and a protection layer (27-2) formed on the dielectric layer. (Column 5 lines 20-36). The protection layer has a bi-layer structure where it includes both MgO and TiO_2 . (Column 3 lines 27-38). Further TiO_2 is layered in at least $3\mu\text{m}$ thick and therefore has an ultraviolet shielding function.

The Examiner notes that the claim limitation that “the dielectric layer is a CVD film” is drawn to a process of manufacturing which is incidental to the claimed apparatus. It is well established that a claimed apparatus cannot be distinguished over the prior art by a process limitation. Specifically the manufacturing method, CVD, does not serve to distinguish the dielectric layer over the prior art dielectric layer which is composed of the same material and serves the same function. Consequently, absent a showing of an unobvious difference between the claimed product and the prior art, the subject product-by-process claim limitation is not afforded patentable weight (see MPEP 2113).

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Regarding claim 2, a protective layer composed of a bi-layer TiO_2 layer would not transmit light of 200nm or less.

Regarding claim 3, the protective layer composed of a bi-layer of TiO_2 has a bandgap less than 6.2 eV.

Regarding claims 5, 6, 8, and 15, Uemura alternatively discloses (See Figure 1), a gas discharge panel including a front substrate (21), electrodes (22 and 23) formed on the substrate, a dielectric layer (26) of low melting point glass (SiO_2) formed on the substrate and electrodes, an intermediate layer (27-1) formed on the dielectric layer, and a protection layer (27-2) formed on the intermediate layer. (Column 5 lines 20-36). The protection layer is composed of MgO while the intermediate layer is composed for TiO_2 . (Column 3 lines 27-38). Further TiO_2 is layered in at least $3\mu\text{m}$ thick and therefore has an ultraviolet shielding function.

The Examiner notes that the claim limitation that “the dielectric layer... made of a CVD film” is drawn to a process of manufacturing which is incidental to the claimed apparatus. It is well established that a claimed apparatus cannot be distinguished over the prior art by a process limitation. Specifically the manufacturing method, CVD, does not serve to distinguish the dielectric layer over the prior art dielectric layer which is composed of the same material and serves the same function. Consequently, absent a showing of an unobvious difference between the claimed product and the prior art, the subject product-by-process claim limitation is not afforded patentable weight (see MPEP 2113).

Regarding claim 7, a TiO_2 layer would not transmit light of 200nm or less.

Regarding claims 1, 4, 5, 6, 8, 14, and 15, Nakada discloses (See Figure 1), a gas discharge panel including a front substrate (11), electrodes (12 and 13) formed on the substrate, a dielectric layer (14) of CVD SiO₂ formed on the substrate and electrodes, and a protection layer (15) of MgO formed on the dielectric layer. (Paragraphs 0029 and 0060). Nakada does not appear to specify the use of a bi-layer protection layer on the dielectric layer, where the bi-layer includes MgO and TiO₂, however Uemura discloses a bi-layer protection structure including both MgO and TiO₂. (Column 3 lines 27-38). The TiO₂ is layered in at least 3μm thick and therefore has an ultraviolet shielding function. Further the use of the bi-layer structure advantageously allows for a better matching of expansion coefficients between the SiO₂ dielectric layer and the MgO protection layer, therefore further eliminating cracks and extending the lifetime of the device. (Column 3 lines 9-16). Thus, it would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skills in the art to incorporate the use of a bi-layer protection layer as taught by Uemura into the device as disclosed by Nakada in order to advantageously extend the lifetime of the device.

Regarding claims 2 and 7, a protective layer composed of a bi-layer TiO₂ layer would not transmit light of 200nm or less.

Regarding claim 3, the protective layer composed of a bi-layer of TiO₂ has a bandgap less than 6.2 eV.

Claims 18 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over Uemura et al. (US 6,650,063).

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Regarding claim 18, Nakada discloses the device as claimed (see rejection of claim 16 above) but does not appear to specify the use of ZrO_2 in the intermediate layer. However Uemura does disclose the use of various metal oxides for use in the intermediate layer. Further the stated purpose of the intermediate layer is to provide a material with a thermal expansion between that of the SiO_2 dielectric layer and the MgO protection layer. It has been held to be within the general skill of a worker in the art to select a known material on the basis of its suitability for the intended use as a matter of obvious design choice. Thus, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skills in the art at the time the invention was made to have selected ZrO_2 as an alternative metal oxide since it has a linear thermal expansion coefficient falling in the desired range and since the selection of known materials for a known purpose is within the skill of the art.

Conclusion

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event,

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however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Contact Information

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Matt P Hodges whose telephone number is (571) 272-2454. The examiner can normally be reached on 7:30 AM to 4:00 PM M-F.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Nimesh Patel can be reached on (571) 272-2457. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (571) 273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

mph



NIMESHKUMAR D. PATEL
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2800